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ABSTRACT

The program is designed to move the state toward competency-based programs of teacher education, in which program decisions for trainees are made on the basis of demonstration by those trainees of pre-specified competencies. The strategy proposed has two major facets: to provide greater flexibility in the operation of local educational programs and to make local personnel accountable for results. A variety of teacher education programs will be used, and eventually teachers will be required to master only those competencies which have been demonstrated by research to relate to pupil learning. As a first stage, a catalog of teaching competencies will be compiled to serve as a reference for organizing teacher training materials, for analyzing teacher training programs, and for identifying competencies for validation through research projects. Evaluation techniques will be identified or developed which correspond with the specific objectives included in the catalog. A series of research projects are designed to show the relationship between teaching competencies and pupil achievement. The third element in the program is the assembly of protocol materials and materials for training in specific teaching, planning, and supervisory skills; and the final element is the establishment of a statewide program for training teacher trainers. (MFM)

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THE FLORIDA PROGRAM FOR IMPROVING THE TRAINING, EVALUATION, AND LICENSURE OF EDUCATIONAL PERSONNEL

This plan grew out of recommendations from three groups which advise the Department of Education: the Teacher Education Advisory Council, the Advisory Council for Educational Research and Development, and the Board of Governors for Educational Research and Development. The Teacher Education Advisory Council is the official agency for advising the State Board of Education and Commissioner on matters related to teacher education. For the past several years, this Council has been making recommendations which move the State toward competency-based programs of teacher education. A competency-based program is one in which program decisions for trainees are made on the basis of demonstration by those trainees of pre-specified competencies. Such programs are also referred to as "performance-based" or "criterion-referenced".

Recently, the Executive Committee of the Teacher Education Advisory Council asked the Department of Education to devise a plan which is based on recommendations from the Council and which brings together the many forces for improving teacher education in the State. The plan proposed herein is an attempt to respond to that request.

The plan was also designed as a response to a request from two additional advisory groups. It has become widely recognized that any plan for improving education must include a teacher education component. For this reason, both the Advisory Council for Educational Research and Development and the Board of Governors for Educational Research and Development have recommended an emphasis on teacher education. The First Annual Report on Educational Research and Development which was issued by the Commissioner of Education in February, 1970, includes a teacher education component. The Second Annual Report for Educational Research and Development which was issued in February, 1971, repeats this recommendation and also makes concrete suggestions regarding program support.

The State's Strategy for Improving Education

A plan for improving the training, evaluation, and licensure of educational personnel should be an integral part of the State's plan for improving education. The strategy presently being followed in this State is aimed at increasing educational productivity. Increased productivity can be recognized by the occurrence of one of the following conditions: (a) costs are reduced without an accompanying loss in pupil achievement, (b) pupil achievement is increased without increasing costs, or (c) both pupil achievement and costs are increased, but increases in achievement warrant the increases in costs.

The burden of the responsibility for increasing productivity is placed upon the teachers, supervisors, and adminsitrators who operate local school programs. The role of the State is to adopt appropriate policies, to direct the flow of State resources, to identify or develop techniques which are likely to improve productivity, and to evaluate and monitor the State program of education.

"This paper was prepared in the Educational Research and Development Section, Florida Department of Education"

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The State's strategy for increasing productivity has two major facets. First, greater flexibility will be provided to those who operate local educational programs and, at the same time, local educational personnel will be made accountable for results. Greater flexibility will be given by relaxing state requirements which restrict available text materials, usable facilities, the allocation of instructional time, and the availability of personnel. While present regulations governing these aspects of school operation were established on the basis of the best available professional judgment, the new strategy hypothesizes that local conditions vary and variations on present practices may lead to increased effectiveness of school programs. Therefore, it seems desirable to remove some State regulation.

However, it would not be in the public interest to eliminate regulations without accompanying requirements for accountability. Accountability is defined as "the process for explaining the utilization of educational resources in terms of their contributions to the attainment of desired results." The most significant element in the new strategy is the conclusion by the State that monitoring the results or outputs of educational programs is a more effective strategy than the more traditional approach of regulating the elements which go into programs.

It should be noted that the State strategy for providing greater flexibility, while holding the persons or institutions operating those programs to be accountable, does not apply only to education at the elementary and secondary levels. It is also being implemented in the areas of teacher education. Present regulations and procedures for obtaining state approval of teacher education programs allow institutions and school districts a great deal of flexibility. The regulations do not require that each preservice teacher education program for science teachers (or for any other field of specialization) contain the specific courses which are described in certification regulations as minimums. An institution may, instead, specify the competencies which its graduates will be expected to demonstrate, identify the procedures by which those competencies will be measured, and then develop a program which leads to those competencies. Once such a program is approved, its graduates will receive regular teaching certificates with no penalties. Institutions are now being encouraged to develop competency-based programs. The plan described herein should facilitate that development.

As mentioned earlier, Florida's strategy for improving education has two facets. The second part of the strategy is represented in a program of educational research and development. The State is sponsoring the development of techniques for assessing the results of educational programs, the costs of educational programs, and the utilization of educational resources. The State is also supporting projects to identify alternative educational policies and practices, and to evaluate those alternatives.

The State efforts to study alternative policies and practices include a series of projects relating to educational personnel. It is recognized that educational personnel must be a major focus of any effort to improve the productivity of an educational system. It is generally agreed that, within the system of public education, the teacher is the most important factor in educational achievement of pupils. Furthermore, the proportion of the educational budget allocated for salaries of teachers and other instructional personnel ranges from 75% upward.

The research and development projects relating to educational personnel are of four major types. These types are as follows:

1. Develop comprehensive statements of teacher competencies and develop instruments for assessing those competencies.

2. Conduct research to demonstrate the relationship between teaching competencies and pupil learning.

3. Identify or produce materials for training teachers and other educational personnel in specified competencies.

4. Assist institutions and school districts with staff development for teacher training personnel.

It should be recognized that the term "teacher" does not refer exclusively to a person assigned to supervise the learning activities of one classroom of pupils. It includes administrators, supervisors, and other persons who assist or support those learning activities. Moreover, the research and development program goes beyond "teacher" as here defined and also includes teacher aides and other non-professional personnel who assist in the instructional process.

The Program Elements

The approach for improving teacher education programs is based on the model depicted in Figure 1. This model shows the relationship between educational goals, teacher education objectives, and teacher evaluation. Box A represents the goals to be achieved by students through the efforts of teachers. These goals may change, as they are continually being reevaluated by society (Box B). The competencies expected of teachers are identified initially on the basis of professional judgment (Box C). Research on teaching is conducted to confirm or refute the validity of judgments regarding appropriate teaching competencies (Box D). In conducting such research, controlled experiments are designed to show the relationship between specified teaching competencies and the accomplishment of certain teaching goals (i.e., pupil learning). On the bases of such research, the judgment of professionals regarding knowledge and skills required of teachers is reconsidered (Box C).

Once teacher education objectives are defined, preservice and inservice teacher education programs are designed to accomplish those objectives (Box E). The programs are then implemented (Box F). Finally, the performance of teacher trainees is evaluated (Box G) in terms of the teacher education objectives. The results of such evaluations may lead to modifications in the design of teacher education programs (Box E).

The application of the model in Figure 1 will lead to a variety of different teacher education programs. It is the intent of the State eventually to require all teachers to master only those competencies which have been demonstrated by research to relate to pupil learning. Other competencies which are selected on the basis of professional judgment will vary from program to program.

A MODEL FOR IMPROVING THE TRAINING AND EVALUATION OF EDUCATIONAL PERSONNEL

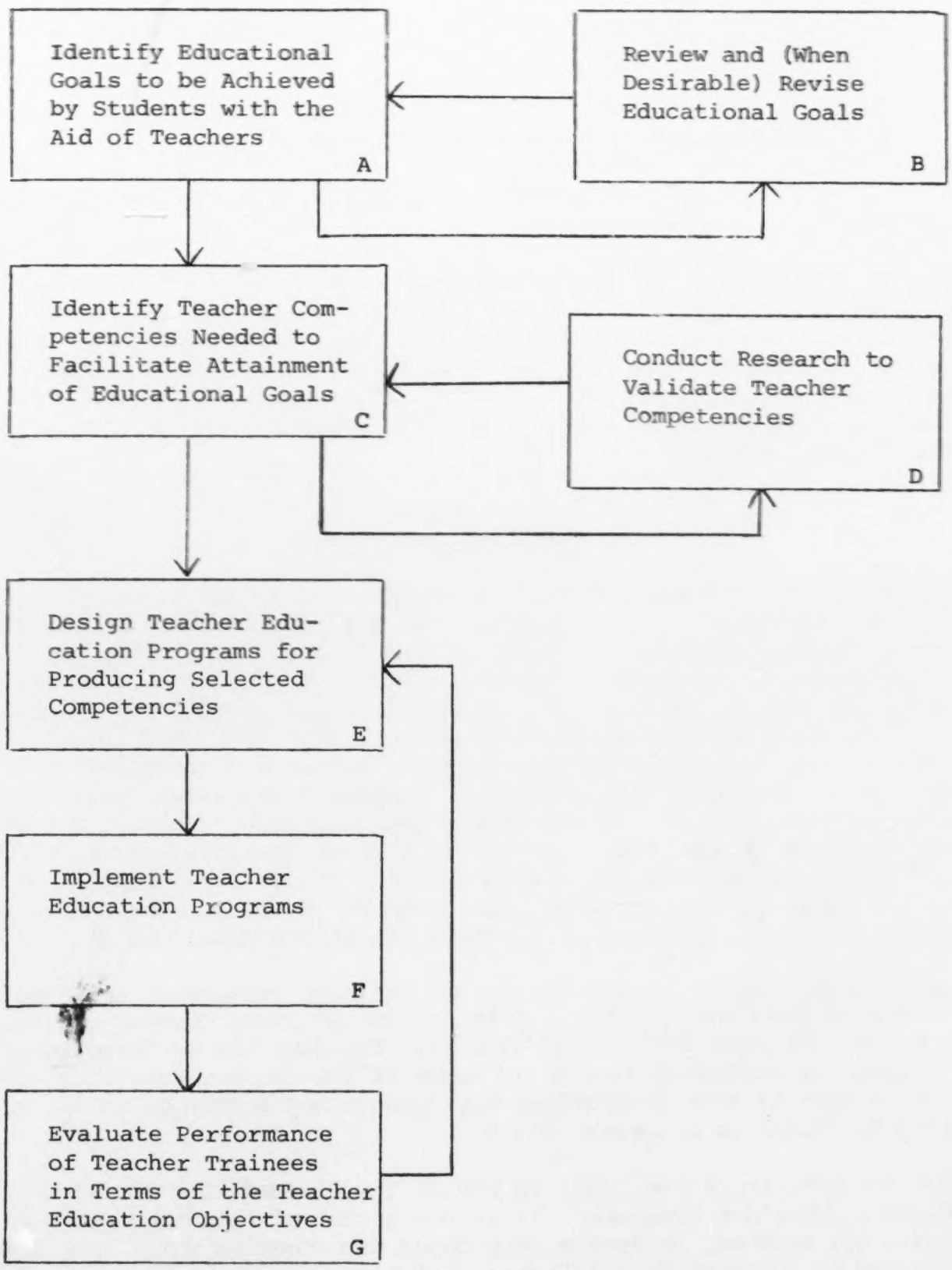

FIGURE I

Even when programs are aiming at the same competencies, there will be no requirement that programs must follow the same instructional procedures, assign the same amount of time to a given portion of the program, or deploy the same complement of resources. Each institution or agency conducting a teacher education program will be encouraged to find the most effective ways to use its resources in accomplishing its objectives.

Compiling a Catalog of Teaching Competencies

The first element in the program for improving the training, evaluation, and licensure of educational personnel is the compiling of a catalog of teaching competencies. This catalog will serve as a reference for organizing teacher training materials, for analyzing teacher training programs, and for identifying competencies for validation through research projects. In assembling the catalog, major areas of teacher competency will be identified. Each of these areas will be broken down into its fundamental areas of knowledge or skills. Each of those knowledge or skill areas will be divided into its logical sub-areas. In some cases, the sub-areas will be subdivided further. Finally, specific objectives will be identified for each of the sub-areas. These will be arranged in a catalog which will include, as nearly as practicable, all objectives which might be sought in any teacher preparation program. However, it should be recognized that no single program will be expected to include all of these objectives.

As the catalog is constructed, evaluation techniques will be identified or developed which correspond with the specific objectives included in the catalog. The evaluation techniques will be criterion-referenced. With these techniques, it will be possible to determine whether a teacher does or does not possess the specified competency. This will open up possibilities for individual tailoring of training programs. It will also allow for the conducting of research which measures the effects of identified competencies.

This portion of the program involves the following tasks:

1. Review available literature to identify teaching competencies and schemes for organizing the catalog.

2. Develop a classification system. The classification system should meet the following criteria: (a) It should be possible to incorporate teaching competencies identified from any source into the classification framework. (b) Once the catalog is complete, the classifications system should help the users (the persons designing or evaluating teacher training programs) to locate the specific skills which they are seeking.

3. Field test and revise the classification system. Persons other than those who develop the classification system should be able to use the system for classifying the teaching competencies which are included in their own teacher training programs.

4. Compile the catalog of teaching competencies. Competencies included in all preservice and inservice teacher education programs in Florida should be identified and inserted in the catalog.

5. Develop assessment instruments for those competencies included in selected teacher training programs or portions of selected teacher training programs.

6. Field test and revise assessment instruments.

Research

The second element in the program for improving the training, evaluation, and licensure of educational personnel consists of a series of related research projects. The research projects are designed to show the relationship between teaching competencies and pupil achievement. The basic impetus for the research program was the following recommendation which was made by the Board of Governors for Educational Research and Development: "The Department of Education should seriously consider a policy which would provide that by 1974, teacher certification requirements would be based only on research evidence showing the relationship between specified teacher characteristics or behaviors and pupil achievement. The Department should institute research projects which will generate information about the relationship between specified teacher characteristics or behaviors and pupil achievement." It should be recognized that the intent of this recommendation was to remove constraints from teacher training institutions, not to impose new restrictions. When research evidence is lacking the state is urged to leave decisions regarding desirable competencies to the professional educators who operate teacher training programs or who recommend teachers for employment.

Research projects will deal only with teaching competencies which can be measured with assessment instruments that correspond with teaching competencies included in the catalog described above. The research projects will be designed to identify the relationship between those competencies and pupil learning. Pupil learning will be measured with criterion-referenced assessment instruments such as those being developed in other educational research and development projects currently being sponsored by the Florida Department of Education.

The following types of projects or activities will be supported under the research portion of the program:

1. Conduct a review of literature to identify previous research results relating teacher competencies to pupil learning. The review of literature should be based on the teaching competencies classified in the catalog described earlier.

2. Solicit information from professionals in research and in education regarding those competencies which appear most likely to be validated or those areas in which research would have the greatest payoff.

3. On the basis of the literature review and professional judgment, solicit research projects related to specified competencies. Projects should not replicate research which has already been done unless there is convincing evidence that replication is a better investment than conducting research in new areas.

4. Report results in a manner which will have the greatest impact on policy recommendations.

Assembling Training Materials

The third element in the program for improving the training, evaluation, and licensure of educational personnel is the assembly of training materials. In order for the training of educational personnel to improve significantly, it will be necessary to obtain or develop carefully designed and validated training materials. These would include materials for instruction in the theoretical aspects of teaching and supervision (often called protocol materials) and materials for training in specific teaching, planning, or supervisory skills. Materials should be designed to improve the efficiency of training and to reduce training costs where practical. A major effort should be made to identify materials which are already available. This will allow earlier use and will reduce development costs. However, materials obtained from outside sources should be evaluated very carefully, using criteria similar to those which are adopted for evaluating locally developed materials. In general, developmental funds should be concentrated on materials which can be used widely. This is necessary to justify the high costs involved in careful development.

The following types of activities will be supported under this portion of the program:

1. Develop a system for conducting reviews and operational field tests of teacher training materials. This will involve:

   a. Identification of an agency to perform administrative tasks related to the review of materials.

   b. Establish procedures for reviewing materials.

   c. Develop criteria for use by reviewers in preservice and inservice teacher education programs throughout the State.

   d. Train reviewers to apply the criteria.

   e. Devise procedures and criteria for use in operational field testing.

   f. Identify a network of persons who will conduct operational field tests in institutions and inservice education programs throughout the State.

2. Collect and classify available materials and submit them to the established review process.

3. Identify potential producers of training materials and protocol materials.

4. Contract for the production of training materials and protocol materials (including total courses using television production techniques).

5. Plan for dissemination.

Staff Development for Teacher Trainers

The final element in the program for improving the training, evaluation, and licensure of educational personnel is the establishment of a statewide program for training teacher trainers. The implementation of anticipated changes in teacher education will require extensive staff development opportunities for most instructional personnel serving in teacher education programs in Florida. This includes faculty members in colleges and universities, as well as persons instructing in inservice education programs conducted by local school districts.

Most teacher education instructors have been taught using (and taught to use) a model for instruction which relies on the instructor to present the information, with reinforcement from texts or reference materials which present the same information. The problem of applying the information is mainly the responsibility of the student. For this model of instruction, the major investment of resources has been in instructional personnel, with the investment in instructional materials negligible when compared with faculty salaries.

The instructional model implied by the program proposed herein is one in which the instructor will primarily guide and manage the learning activities of his students. Where possible, the burden for communicating information will be carried by carefully designed printed materials, visual materials, and audio-visual materials. The materials will be organized so that students will systematically apply their knowledge or skills. A student will not be considered to have learned until his application is successful--until his competency has been demonstrated. The professional knowledge and skills of instructors will be used to select the most appropriate basic materials for use with their students, to modify or adapt those materials where necessary, to select appropriate supplemental materials for individual students, to counsel students in a manner which will enable them to integrate their learning, and to evaluate and attest to the competency of students who have completed their programs.

A statewide staff development program for teacher training personnel will be established to help teacher trainers prepare for this new role. This program will not be housed in a single institution. Instead, it will draw upon existing institutions for resources. When needed resources are not available in the existing institutions, the resources will be found elsewhere or they will be developed. Decisions regarding participation in staff development activities will be made within individual institutions or school districts. No state requirements for participation in staff development activities are anticipated. It is assumed that institutions, school districts, and individual instructors will see the potential of newly developed teacher training materials and techniques and will opt to apply them. Thus, they will participate in the staff development activities which are conducted. The following types of staff development activities are being considered for operation under this aspect of the Educational Research and Development Program:

1. A 1-2 hour orientation session designed to introduce university and public school faculties to competency-based teacher education. This session will be designed to provide participants with the information necessary for decisions regarding subsequent participation in actual training activities.

2. Short term programs (2-3 days) for all teacher educators who wish to develop a more thorough understanding of competency-based teacher education.

3. Extended short term programs (about two weeks) for persons responsible for designing, organizing, or developing teacher training materials or teacher training programs.

4. A regular college course for graduate students dealing with the theoretical aspects of competency-based teacher education.

5. Short term programs (4-40 hours) dealing with specific materials which have been developed and are ready for general use. The bulk of the staff development activities will fall in this category.

6. Individual programs for program directors or managers. These programs will consist primarily of consultant help for persons responsible for teacher education programs in local institutions or school districts. The purpose of this assistance will be to help them in dealing with specific and unique problems which they encounter in planning and conducting competency-based teacher education programs.

Actions by Advisory Groups

The first draft of the plan described herein was reviewed by the Teacher Education Advisory Council, the R & D Advisory Council, and the R & D Board of Governors during the month of March. The plan which they reviewed was basically the same as that described in the foregoing pages. The only changes made in the present version were for the purpose of clarification.

The actions of the advisory groups were as follows:

1. The Teacher Education Advisory Council endorsed the first three parts of the plan--compiling a catalog of teaching competencies, research on teaching competencies, and assembling training materials. In their endorsement, they stipulated that the research and development program should apply to all aspects of the teacher training curriculum--including general education and subject matter specialization--as well as work in professional education. In making the motion for endorsement, it was explained that the Council was not endorsing staff development for teacher trainers at the present time because they thought the plan needed more clarification; the Council is generally in favor of providing continuous opportunities for professional growth of teacher educators.

2. The Advisory Council for Educational Research and Development endorsed the total program. This Council, from its initial meetings, has encouraged the inclusion of teacher education as part of the State Educational Research and Development Program.

3. The Board of Governors for Educational Research and Development also endorsed the plan. The Board recommended that support for compiling a catalog of teaching competencies and for assembling and evaluating available training materials be provided out of the 1970-71 allocation for educational research and development.

Immediate Plans

Immediate plans for the implementation of the program described in this report include the following:

1. Contracting with an institution or agency to compile a catalog of teaching competencies. The general procedure will be to review literature, programs, and professional opinion so that a structure for cataloging will be established and a preliminary set of competencies identified by September 1, 1971. Then, the catalog will be reviewed by professional educators in Florida from September to December. Reviewers will be identified on each campus in the state and in each school district wishing to participate.

2. Establish a center for collecting, coordinating, evaluating, and disseminating teacher training materials. A request for proposals will be issued to establish a non-profit center. This center will be responsible for identifying materials currently available, ordering materials, cataloging materials, circulating materials for evaluation, issuing evaluation reports, and reproducing materials which are not available from other sources. A network of teacher educators wishing to participate in the evaluation of materials will be established. Members of this network will receive orientation and training in uniform evaluation techniques which will be followed. The evaluation of materials will take place in the classes and other activities which operate under the supervision of the teacher educators in the network.

3. An orientation session will be designed for presentation at colleges, universities, and school districts considering participation in the Florida program for improving the training, evaluation, and licensure of educational personnel. This orientation session will explain the concept of competency-based teacher education, will explain the R & D Teacher Education Program, and will give teacher educators an opportunity to elect to participate further in the program.